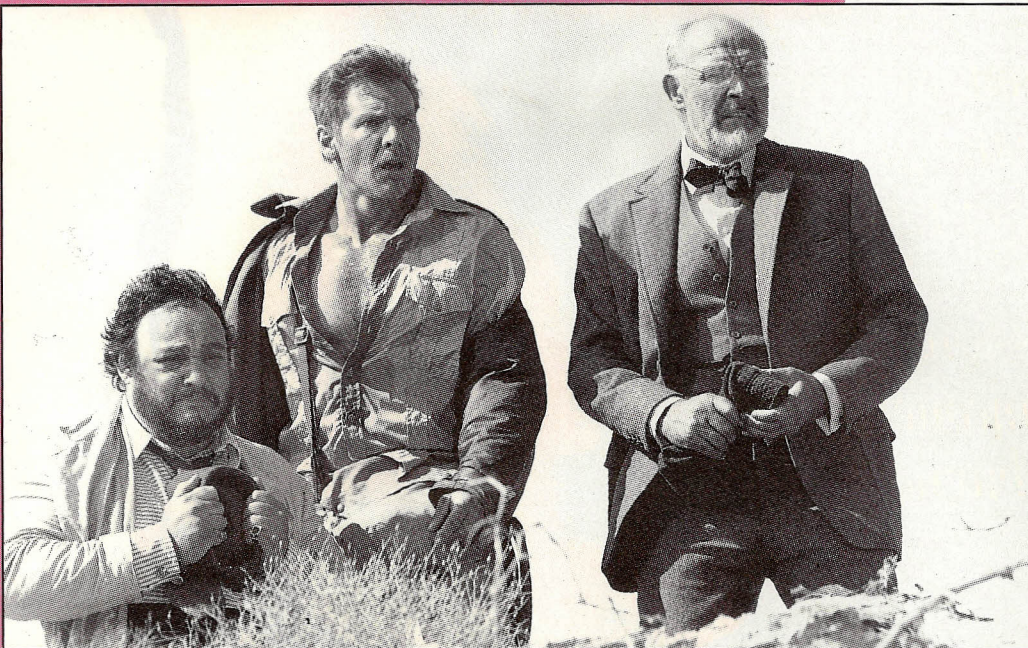


SPIELBERG'S LAST CRUSADE



During the American 'Summer of sequels' Spielberg's and Lucas' *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* set the standard. American viewers have been served a diet of sequels that include second servings of *Ghostbusters* and *Lethal Weapon*, third servings of *Karate Kid*, fifths of *Star Trek* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, an eighth *Friday* The 13th and 17th James Bond in *Licensed To Kill*.

Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade had the secret of success sown up: Harrison Ford, a history of box office success, and Sean Connery - the first Bond! His presence has a double significance! In 1977 Spielberg told Lucas he wanted to make a James Bond movie. "I have something better than James Bond," Lucas replied, and sketched the scenario for *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*.

Spielberg got what he asked for: a globe-trotting, opinionated superhero in the mould of Bond, and the beginning of cinema history, the Indiana Jones trilogy.

Two decades ago, Connery walked away from the Bond persona (apart from a brief visit in the 1983, *Never Say Never Again*) and followed another path, a path which recently has seen him re-emerge as one of the more eloquent and, in the eyes of many, the pick of the majestic, older stars, with appearances in *The Name Of The Rose* and *The Presidio* to name but two.

Time has not diminished the cheeky, laconic

humour that made his Bond, probably, the best of them all.

Although Connery was not the first choice for the role of Indy's estranged father, Spielberg wanted him, and when Connery walked onto the set with Harrison Ford, Spielberg is quoted as saying, "Everyone got quiet and respectful. The two are like royalty . . . the royalty you love because they make your lives better."

"I wanted to play Henry Jones as a kind of Sir Richard Burton . . . so much behind him, so many hidden elements in his life," said Connery. With a puckish humour and dry delivery, Connery's arrival re-vitalised the script. Connery's Henry Jones could do things otherwise not considered. When his Henry reveals he has slept with Elsa (a blonde sorceress poised between greed and glory, the series' first indispensable female), with whom Indiana had also dallied, his son replies with a disbelieving "Huh?" Henry shoots back, "I'm as human as the next man!" Indy growls back, "I was the next man!"

It's the kind of situational humour that only masters like

Connery and Ford could pull off.

But, the question remains, is this rash of sequels the symptom of creative bankruptcy, an indication that there are no new ideas? "No," say the industry spokespeople in Hollywood. Sequels are not necessarily about a failure of the Hollywood imagination, they're about lowering risks. A fair point when someone is gambling \$US40 million on a film's success. Last year saw record grosses in the US for both theatrical films and video cassettes, with one reinforcing the other, but the risk factors still remain.

In a sense, say other commentators, every film, every work of fiction, is a sequel, another link in a narrative chain, a narrative convention that goes back centuries to its inspirations.

So perhaps, in the final analysis, it is not a question of to run a sequel (followed by numerals) or not. It's whether that sequel adds anything to the series, and as such to the narrative tradition it espouses.

One thing is sure - *Indiana Jones And the Final Crusade* neatly wraps up the Indiana Jones trilogy and mythology, and will be the last, a magnificent ending to a magnificent tale. Comments Spielberg, "I've learnt more about movie craft from making the *Indiana Jones* films than I did from *E.T.* or *Jaws*, and now I feel I've graduated from the college of Cliff-Hanger U."

- Les Bush